

## APPRENTICE / SPONSOR GUIDELINES

### Federal and State Regulations for Sponsors and Apprentices:

1. A Sponsor must hold a valid Master Falconry permit or a valid General Falconry permit with two seasons of experience or 24 total months of experience with the Sponsor's own raptors at the General level.
2. A Sponsor must not have more than three apprentices at any one time.
3. To become an Apprentice Falconer, a permittee must have a letter/email from their sponsor stating that they will assist the permittee in:
  - a) Learning about the husbandry and training of raptors held for falconry;
  - b) Learning relevant wildlife laws and regulations; and
  - c) When the time is right, deciding what species of raptor is appropriate for them to possess.
4. An Apprentice must notify the MN DNR Falconry Permit Coordinator within ten days if there is a change in sponsorship (it is recommended that the Sponsor also notify the MN DNR Falconry Permit Coordinator as to the reason for the change in sponsorship).
5. An Apprentice must practice falconry under the Sponsor's supervision for at least two seasons of experience with the Apprentice's own raptors. The Apprentice's training must include capturing, maintaining, training, flying, hunting, and releasing raptors.
6. Junior Apprentices and Apprentice Falconers may take and possess only passage red-tailed hawks (*Buteo jamaicensis*), except that, with approval from the Apprentice's Sponsor, an Apprentice permittee with a minimum of two seasons of experience may take and possess any raptor allowed for an Apprentice class falconer under federal regulations and under M.R. 6238.1200, subpart 16.
7. For Apprentices under age 18 and for Junior Apprentices, their parent or legal guardian must sign the application, and must agree to take legal responsibility for the activities of the child (it is the recommendation of the DNR that the Sponsor also work in close coordination with the Apprentice's parent or guardian).
8. Junior Apprentices must house their raptor at the legal residence of an adult, preferably a parent or legal guardian, who is in possession of a valid falconry permit or at the permitted location of the adult's raptors (it is the recommendation of the DNR that for Junior Apprentices, the parent or guardian become a falconer as well). If the adult falconry permittee is an Apprentice, only one raptor is allowed under either the Junior Apprentice falconry permit or the adult's permit unless the additional raptor is housed with the Sponsor.
9. To advance to General Falconer, a permittee must have a letter/email from their Sponsor stating that the permittee has practiced falconry with raptor(s) as an Apprentice Falconer to obtain at least 2 seasons of experience, including maintaining, training, flying, and hunting the raptor(s) for least 6 months in each year (at least 4 of those months during the fall hunting season). That practice may have included the capture and release of the falconry raptors.

## Additional Sponsorship Recommendations:

State and Federal falconry regulations do not address all the duties and responsibilities of the Sponsor and the Apprentice. Therefore, the following guidelines based on the Minnesota Falconer's Association (MFA)'s sponsorship guidelines have been prepared and are recommended by the Minnesota DNR.

### The Sponsor:

1. The Sponsor shall be available to the potential Apprentice Falconer after they have passed the falconry exam, but before the construction of the facilities.
2. The Sponsor shall be available for a minimum of two years to their Apprentices.
3. The Sponsor is not responsible for any expense involved in sponsorship such as telephone bills or travel. However, regular meetings between the Apprentice and Sponsor are recommended by the Minnesota DNR (a minimum of 20 hours of field instruction annually); therefore, sponsoring Apprentices that require long commutes is discouraged.
4. The Sponsor should promote the open exchange of ideas and assist in development of the Apprentice's falconry skills. A lack of adequate communication by the Apprentice should be followed up on by the Sponsor.
5. The Sponsor's responsibility is to try to provide answers to questions, help solve problems and assist in developing falconry skills and skills relating to the care and maintenance of raptors (seasonal advice should be included in the consultations).
6. The Sponsor is expected to provide information regarding various aspects of falconry, including building of facilities and making equipment. In addition, the Sponsor should inspect the facilities and equipment before the initial inspection by the Minnesota DNR.
7. The Sponsor is not responsible for acts by the Apprentice that are unlawful or constitute mismanagement, and such acts shall **not** reflect upon the abilities or reputation of the Sponsor. However, if the Sponsor becomes aware of situations relating to the Apprentice which may adversely affect the health and welfare of the bird or the sport of falconry they must act accordingly by contacting the MN DNR Falconry Permit Coordinator.
8. The Sponsor should inform the MN DNR Falconry Permit Coordinator of pertinent issues relating to the Apprentice's permit. In the event of serious mismanagement issues, the Sponsor may recommend revocation of the permit. Generally, before revocation proceedings occur, an Apprentice will be placed with a new sponsor in order to work with them to correct the deficiencies or corroborate that the permit should be revoked.

## The Apprentice:

1. The MFA recommends all Apprentices read:
  - North American Falconry and Hunting Hawks by Frank Beebe and Harold Webster is considered the handbook on falconry, with many exam questions based on this book.
  - Falconry: Art and Practice by Emma Ford.
  - Falconry and Hawking by Phillip Glasier.
  - The Falconer's Apprentice by William Oakes.
  - The Red-tailed Hawk by Liam McGranaghan
  - Falconry Equipment by Bryan Kimsey and Jim Hodge
  - American Falconry Magazine
  - NAFA (North American Falconers' Association) newsletters and annual Journal
3. The Apprentice must maintain their facilities, equipment, and hawk in good condition and abide by all Federal/State regulations.
4. It is the Apprentice's responsibility to keep in close contact with their Sponsor over the phone and **in person**. They should ask questions and request clarification on any issues that they do not understand or feel they need assistance. Regular meetings between the Apprentice and Sponsor are recommended by the Minnesota DNR (a minimum of 20 hours of field instruction annually); therefore, Apprentices should find Sponsors that are close enough that they will be able to visit and call regularly. The Apprentice predominantly bears the burden of travel time and expense.
5. If there are personality or stylistic issues that are causing problems in the Sponsor/Apprentice relationship, the Sponsor and Apprentice should contact the MN DNR Falconry Permit Coordinator. If those issues cannot be resolved the Apprentice may need to find a new Sponsor.

Membership in national, state, and local falconry clubs are recommended, but not required. Membership helps falconers obtain the most up-to-date information on falconry and to improve, aid, and encourage competency in the art of falconry. The falconry clubs may have additional recommendations regarding the Sponsor/Apprentice relationship. If you are a member of a local falconry club, you should contact club representatives for the most recent recommendations.